



484364

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION V

DATE: JUL 31 1984

SUBJECT: Emergency Response Cleanup Service Request for a Poisonous
Waste Material, City of Chicago, Police DepartmentFROM: Stephen M. Browning
On-Scene Coordinator (5S-CD0/SRS)TO: Valdas V. Adamkus
Regional Administrator (5RA)THRU: William H. Sanders, III
Director, Environmental Services Division (5S)*W. Sanders*PURPOSE

This is a request for confirmation of your verbal approval to expend \$500 via Emergency Response Cleanup Services (ERCS) contract to remove, transport, analyze, and ultimately dispose of a package containing a poisonous waste material. The original verbal authorization was for \$5,000, because we did not know the quantity nor the nature of the substance, however, now we know the substance, its concentration and the amount involved.

BACKGROUND

On July 3, 1984, a Mr. Juan Martinez, discovered a canister filled with an unknown substance while cleaning out his garage, located at 1402 North Artesian, in Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Martinez, immediately notified the Chicago Police Department who, in turn, received the unknown substance and secured it in their Evidence Recovery Room, located at 2652 South California Avenue, in Chicago, Illinois.

The unknown substance remained in the Chicago Police Department's Evidence Recovery Room until July 25, 1984. At that time, a Lieutenant Shields, rediscovered the canister and became alarmed. The Police Department requested assistance from the Chicago Fire Department and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). Neither was able to respond, so the Police contacted Mr. Robert J. Bowden, Chief, Spill Response Section. Mr. Bowden contacted the IEPA and confirmed that they would not respond. Mr. Bowden dispatched a team from the Technical Assistance Team to secure the package. The Technical Assistance Team responded and upon testing with a Draeger tube, found an alarmingly high concentration of cyanide gas within the plastic garbage bag surrounding the package. The Technical Assistance Team contacted the Standby Officer who, after obtaining your authorization activated the ERCS contractor. The material was transferred from the Police Evidence Recovery Room to Mid America Environmental Services on July 24, 1984, with this writer functioning as an intermediary.

The quantity of cyanide is estimated to be five pounds and is in powder form.

The site, the Chicago Police Department's Evidence Recovery Room, is not listed on the National Priority List.

THREAT

Accidental absorption or ingestion constitutes an immediate and significant risk of harm to human life and health. However, the absolute chemical purity of the compound containing cyanide is, at present, unknown. Accordingly, the in-progress immediate action is in accordance with paragraph 300.65 of the National Contingency Plan.

ENFORCEMENT

There is no evidence to indicate additional quantities of the cyanide compound are present, either at the subject's residence, or, in the Police Evidence Recovery Room.

PROPOSED PROJECT AND COSTS

The objectives of this emergency response are two-fold. First is to eliminate, by removal, the potential for accidental ingestion by human beings. Second is to quantify the purity of cyanide present. The response is comprised of three components.

Part 1 - Secure and remove the material from the Police Department's Evidence Recovery Room.

Part 2 - Via chemical analysis, quantify the percent cyanide present in the compound.

Part 3 - Based upon the chemical analysis, locate a suitable, legal, and safe environment for disposal.

COST ESTIMATE

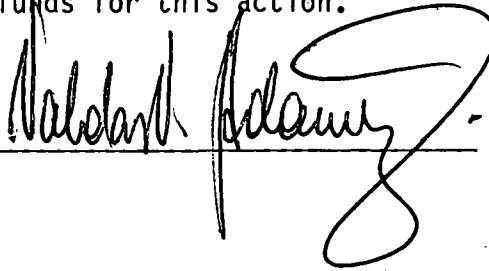
We estimated that costs to secure, transport, analyze, and properly dispose of this material will not exceed \$500.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATION

Based on the nature of the threat and the fact that ERCS involvement is now in progress, I recommend your immediate confirmation of this request. The proposed actions, now in progress, will successfully abate the threat

to the public health and to the environment. My office will allocate \$500 in extramural funds for this action.

Approval

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Adams", written over a horizontal line.

Date

July 31st, 1984

Disapproval

Date
